

HOUSE BILL 459

D4

2lr1664

By: **Delegates Alston and Vallario**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2012

Assigned to: Judiciary

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Joint Custody of Children**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force to Study Joint Custody of Children;
4 providing for the membership, chair, and staffing of the Task Force; prohibiting
5 a member of the Task Force from receiving compensation, but authorizing
6 reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Task Force to study and make
7 recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Task Force to report
8 its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on
9 or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally
10 relating to the Task Force to Study Joint Custody of Children.

11 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
12 MARYLAND, That:

13 (a) There is a Task Force to Study Joint Custody of Children.

14 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

15 (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, one appointed by the
16 President of the Senate and one appointed by the Chair of the Judicial Proceedings
17 Committee;

18 (2) two members of the House of Delegates, one appointed by the
19 Speaker of the House and one appointed by the Chair of the Judiciary Committee; and

20 (3) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

21 (i) one African American studies professor from Bowie State
22 University, recommended by the President of Bowie State University;

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (ii) three attorneys representing a diversity of gender, races,
2 and geographic regions in the State;

3 (iii) one Family Division master;

4 (iv) one family law attorney who represents men in child custody
5 cases;

6 (v) one State judge;

7 (vi) one sociologist from Towson State University, recommended
8 by the President of Towson State University;

9 (vii) one sociologist from the University of Maryland, Eastern
10 Shore, recommended by the President of the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore;
11 and

12 (viii) one statistician from the University of Maryland, College
13 Park, recommended by the President of the University of Maryland, College Park.

14 (c) The Task Force members shall designate the chair of the Task Force.

15 (d) The Administrative Office of the Courts shall provide staff for the Task
16 Force.

17 (e) A member of the Task Force:

18 (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Task Force; but

19 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard
20 State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

21 (f) The Task Force shall:

22 (1) study, survey, and assess:

23 (i) the advantages and disadvantages of awarding joint custody
24 to both parents;

25 (ii) the effect of third party custody arrangements and its
26 impact on joint custody; and

27 (iii) the role of gender in the outcome of child custody cases;

28 (2) gather quantitative and qualitative data regarding joint custody in
29 the State as compared to joint custody in other states;

1 (3) make findings about whether male parents or guardians are
2 discriminated against in child custody cases; and

3 (4) identify possible solutions to address any possible gender
4 discrimination in child custody cases.

5 (g) (1) On or before December 31, 2012, the Task Force shall report its
6 preliminary findings to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State
7 Government Article, the General Assembly.

8 (2) On or before December 31, 2013, the Task Force shall report its
9 final findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1246
10 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

11 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
12 July 1, 2012. It shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and, at the end of June
13 30, 2014, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act shall be
14 abrogated and of no further force and effect.